

## FOREWORD

As a premiere after a series of nine volumes of comparative literary studies in Hungarian, the Department of Comparative Literature at Szeged University proudly presents this latest edition: a volume of comparative literary studies in English. The present collection of works serves as a record of both departmental research and of the tendencies in literary theories and histories that are well worth to explore, popularize, teach and draw on by all students at the department. The volume thus serves as a list of topics for potential PhD dissertations and as a list of approaches that have been open for discussion at departmental seminars, debates and conferences. This is all the more so, since this volume's studies are all results of research that follow the changing tendencies of comparative literature, including the growing interest in textuality, the juxtaposition of intertextuality and intermediality and the rethinking of hermeneutical hypotheses through modern recording systems.

Comparative literature naturally seeks a 'contextual' approach to humankind's accumulated achievements between Ancient times and the Post-modern. In other words, it requires the synchronicity and diachronicity of individual *ouvres*, pieces of works or genres to be themed not as mutually exclusive features but rather as mutually complementary sets. Hence this volume attempts, first, to read together Hungarian and non-Hungarian literature and culture, second, to confront literature with its related arts and, third, to analyze recent issues of ever-debated authorship (cf. "the death of the author") and the relationship between fiction and reference. The studies of the present volume are all clearly indicative of the wide scope and openness of the authors. The school—or rather schools—of hermeneutics and deconstruction both claim the integration—and not the exclusiveness—of individual schools into the context of the history of arts, a scene that all of us, including the authors, are parts of. Works are not to serve theories but rather the opposite: theories are to help researchers with more reliable systems of categorization, accurate terminology and consistent articulation. Theory and history mutually presuppose each other; subject and approach change in relation to each other.

This volume is sending a message about promising academic careers, conclusions and partial results, research hypotheses and analytical procedures. We hereby present it for all to enjoy and discuss.

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